

times. We must pursue economic, agriculture, and energy policies that increase the chances that our farmers can continue to farm the land and feed the world.

Mr. Speaker, as my farmers said, we need real help for the real America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. CARSON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WAL-MART MAKING LIFE WORSE FOR WORKERS WHILE APPEARING TO DO GOOD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, this morning the New York Times reported an absolutely shocking story. The Times published an internal memo from Wal-Mart written earlier this year. The contents of that memo are stunning.

The memo, penned by Wal-Mart's executive vice president for benefits, is concerned with employee benefits, namely how to cut the cost of benefits while improving Wal-Mart's public relations. In other words, the memo laid out a scheme whereby Wal-Mart will make life worse for working people, while appearing to do good. It focused on cosmetic improvements to Wal-Mart's image and real damage to Wal-Mart's employees.

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First of all, the memo admits that Wal-Mart's critics are onto something.

The memo states that Wal-Mart's health care plan, for example, is expensive for low-income families, and Wal-Mart has a significant percentage of associates and their children on public assistance. The memo states that 46 percent of children of Wal-Mart employees are either on Medicaid or uninsured. It reveals that in 2004, 38 percent of Wal-Mart's employees enrolled in the company health plan spent more than 16 percent of the average Wal-Mart income on health care.

Next, the memo goes on to complain that too many workers are sticking around too long, driving up labor costs. The thanks that these loyal employees get from Wal-Mart is a plan by Wal-Mart to get rid of them. According to the memo, Wal-Mart is seeking to cut its labor costs by switching to more part-time employees who will not have meaningful access to the company health care plan. So while Wal-Mart announces to the public that they are going to offer the best health care plan they can for their employees, they are secretly redesigning their work force so those who work for them will not be able to take advantage of the health care plan that they have announced.

The memo also suggests that Wal-Mart can cut its labor costs by keeping less healthy employees out of the workforce. It even suggests that they should include physical lifting requirements in the cashier job, just so that the company can use that requirement as an excuse not to hire unhealthy people. The memo says that the top Wal-Mart officials received the recommendation enthusiastically. And, guess what? We are starting to see those changes take place.

Earlier this week Wal-Mart announced a new health care plan for employees, including a high-deductible plan with health savings accounts. What does the memo say about this? It recommends plans with high deductibles and health savings accounts in order to attract low utilizers, that is a euphemism for healthier people, and discourage employment of high utilizers, the euphemism for sick people.

The question is often asked, is Wal-Mart bad for America? The company's own executive vice president has answered that question. The memo speaks for itself.

Madam Speaker, what Wal-Mart is saying here is that the benefit that they have announced to their employees as being new and expansive it turns out is no benefit at all. You must work 1 year before you qualify, and yet Wal-Mart plans to get rid of those people who have worked that length of time. Wal-Mart plans to hire more part-time people so they will not qualify for the health care plan. Should they hire somebody that qualifies for it, they want to be able to discriminate in their hiring against somebody who may have a health care problem, and, therefore, they do not want to hire them, so they will make up a test that that person has to go through, go around collecting shopping carts or lifting things so that they can root those people out of the selection process for whom they would hire. So Wal-Mart then says that this is the discriminatory policy that they want to follow.

What this shows is that Wal-Mart in the last couple of days has announced a new energy policy; they announced a new health care policy; they said they support an increase in the minimum wage, that it would help their businesses; and people started to say, what is this? Is this an extreme makeover for Wal-Mart? Have they come to their senses whereby they recognize their obligations to their employees, their obligations to the Earth's environment, their obligations on energy policy? Has Wal-Mart finally become responsible?

No, this is not an extreme makeover. This is a cosmetic nip and tuck. This is a cosmetic redo of a policy that is no policy at all, because, apparently, Wal-Mart has already designed, as this memo points out, the means by which they will not have to invoke the benefits of the health policy for their employees.

This is damning evidence, but what it means, if we thought that this was

going to be maybe a new Wal-Mart, a Wal-Mart that would be welcome to communities rather than fought by communities, what this means is, in fact, that that is not the case at all. Wal-Mart is going to continue their policy of everyday low wages, of everyday no health care, of everyday ruination of the environment, of everyday mistreatment of their workers. That is the Wal-Mart policy. That is the Wal-Mart policy that caused them to violate labor laws over and over again, to discriminate against their employees over and over again, to abuse the women employees over and over again. That is the record of Wal-Mart.

This was a false sunrise. This was a false sense that somehow Wal-Mart had started to accept its responsibility towards its employees. In fact, once again, it is going to abuse its employees. Sadly so, that is the case.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SCHMIDT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

REMEMBERING SAM SMITH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recall the life of Sam C. Smith, former mayor of Cartersville, Georgia, president of Century Bank, and a lifelong community activist who leaves behind an everlasting legacy of service to his hometown. Sam is survived by his wife, Connie Hill Smith, and his three children, Ginny, Taylor, and Drew.

Sam's untimely death this past weekend is deeply felt by the entire Cartersville community, and I would like to share some of his accomplishments here today.

Sam lived life with a passion for everything he did, and he worked tirelessly for the betterment of his community. Never a man with small dreams or goals, Sam served as mayor of Cartersville from 1998 to 2002, and his tenure exemplified the kind of work that can be achieved when a city's leader is committed, involved, and enthusiastic about making his city a better place to live.